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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

ON THE

PREVENTION AND REPRESSION OF CRIME,

INCLUDING

Penal and Reformatory Treatment:

*Definitely fixed to open July 3, 1872,*

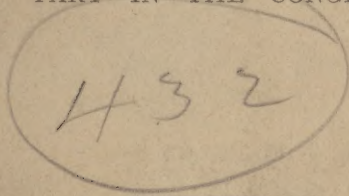
IN THE CITY OF LONDON.



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CIRCULAR LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEES IN THE  
SEVERAL COUNTRIES PROPOSING TO TAKE  
PART IN THE CONGRESS.



NEW YORK:

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1871.



## CIRCULAR LETTER.

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OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL PRISON ASSOCIATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
No. 46 BIBLE HOUSE, Astor Place, New York, *Dec. 12, 1871.*

TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF

GENTLEMEN: The undersigned has the honor, under instructions from the Directors of the American Prison Association, to address to you the following communication. With the exception of the time and place for the meeting of the Congress, which are definitively fixed, everything herein contained is to be regarded in the light of suggestion, and you are invited to express your concurrence or non-concurrence therewith, and, in all cases of non-concurrence, to suggest the modifications or changes which you may desire.

### I.—PLACE AND TIME OF THE CONGRESS.

London has been selected as the place for holding the International Congress, conformably to a large majority of votes to that effect, received in reply to a circular letter, sent out to all parts of the world in 1869. The fixing of the time for opening its sessions has been a matter of greater difficulty. The year has not been in debate; but the month and day have given occasion to no little difference of opinion, and have led to considerable friendly discussion. It is not needful to go into any lengthened explanation; it is enough to say that failure in the country where the Congress is to be held could not be risked, and that it was the unanimous judgment of persons, equally high in position and wise in counsel, that full success, so far as England is concerned, could not be counted upon, if the date of opening were made later than that actually determined upon, viz.: the 3d of July, 1872.

### II.—NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

It is judged desirable that there should be, in every country taking part in the Congress, a National Committee: 1. To serve as an organ of correspondence. 2. To prepare a memorandum to be submitted to the Congress, setting forth the actual state of the prison administration of that country. 3. To determine what classes of persons, other than Commissioners appointed by the Government, shall be invited to serve as members of the Congress. 4. To suggest topics for consideration and specialists for the preparation of papers.

In England, a National Committee, composed of a large number of citizens, including many distinguished names, has been formed; and its Secretary is EDWIN PEARS, Esq., No. 1 Adam street, Adelphi, London, W. C., to whom letters may be addressed.

In France, it is understood that a Commission, created by Napoleon in 1869, on prisons, and which is to be immediately revived and reorganized by the present Government, will act as a National Committee on all matters pertaining to the Interna-



tional Penitentiary Congress. Communications may be addressed to **MONSIEUR VICTOR BOURNAT**, Avocat, No. 20 Rue Jacob, Paris.

In Belgium, the Government has named a National Committee, and letters containing matters intended for its consideration may be directed to **MONSIEUR J. STEVENS**, Inspector-General of Prisons, Brussels.

In the Netherlands, the Government has also appointed a Committee, and communications designed for the said Committee may be addressed to **MONSIEUR M. S. POLS**, Avocat, The Hague.

The Swiss Government has named a National Committee, letters for which are to be directed to **M. le Dr. GUILLAUME**, Directeur du Pénitencier, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

The Italian Government has likewise named a similar Committee, composed, as the undersigned has been officially informed, of eminent citizens. Letters intended for this Committee may be addressed to **SIGNOR FELICE CARDON**, Director-General of Prisons, Florence.

The Government of Colombia, South America, has also designated its National Committee, composed of nine citizens, among "the most distinguished [so Minister Perez informs me] and the most fit to coöperate in labors of the kind proposed." The Committee may be addressed through **SEÑOR JOSÉ MARIA VILLAMIZAR GALLARDO**, directed to the care of "his Excellency **SEÑOR S. PEREZ**, Minister of Colombia, Washington, United States."

The undersigned awaits the announcement of other National Committees, which will be made known to you at the earliest moment after their reception.

### III.—INTERNATIONAL OR GENERAL COMMITTEE.

An International Committee will be needed, as well as national ones, though at a later period, in the progress of preparation for the Congress. It is suggested that the International Committee may be fitly constituted out of the National Committees, by each designating not exceeding three of its members to that end; the number of votes, however, in the General Committee to be limited to the number of National Committees represented therein. It would be necessary for the International Committee to meet, in London, at least a week prior to the opening of the Congress, perhaps earlier, for the purpose of examining the papers offered for reading, of completing and printing the programme of proceedings, and of having all things in readiness for the work in hand as soon as the body shall have been organized.

### IV.—COMPOSITION OF THE CONGRESS.

The Congress should be so constituted as to embody, representatively, all the experience, knowledge and wisdom of the world, theoretical and practical, relating to the questions which are to come before it for discussion. Its composition, therefore, must be such as to give effect to this idea; that is to say, it must be catholic and comprehensive. It is certain that many of the leading Governments of the world will have official members present in the Congress; it is hoped that all of them will. But if it should be composed wholly of such, it would lack the breadth which it is desirable to give it; and one of the functions of the National Committees, as already suggested, should be to designate, each for its own country, the persons or classes of persons to be invited to take part in the proceedings. In addition to Commissioners, appointed by the National Government and the several States of the American Union, the American Prison Association propose to issue invitations to the following classes of persons, viz.: 1. Wardens of State Prisons. 2. Superintendents of Houses

of Correction and Penitentiaries. 3. Superintendents of Juvenile Reformatories. 4. Chaplains of the above classes of institutions. 5. Members of Prison and Reformatory Boards. 6. Members of Boards of State Charities. 7. Representatives appointed by Prison Societies. 8. Chiefs of Police in the larger cities. 9. President Judges of the more important Criminal Courts. 10. The higher Prosecuting Officers. 11. Such other persons, not falling within the above categories, as, from their knowledge of penitentiary science and their devotion to penitentiary reform, would be desirable members of the Congress.

This Association, thus resolving for itself, has no desire to dictate to others, but judges it best that each National Committee should use its discretion as regards the persons to be invited from its own country to attend the Congress and participate in its doings.

#### V.—DURATION OF THE CONGRESS.

The title of the Congress indicates, and was intended to indicate, the breadth to be given to its labors. Whatever may be made an agent in the repression and extermination of crime falls within the scope of these labors:—preventive measures, reformatory work, prison discipline, police action, and the improvement of criminal law. Again, the Congress, it is hoped and believed, will contain representatives from every civilized nation of the world, some of whom, consequently, will have come many thousands of miles to attend it. It is likely, moreover, to be a large body, made up of representative men on this subject from every region of the globe, and embracing therefore large stores of experience, knowledge, and special ability pertaining to the matters to be considered. It is not to be expected that a body, so composed, so endowed, and having questions of such breadth to investigate and determine, will or can do its work effectively, unless it allows itself considerable time in which to accomplish it. Probably a fortnight will not be too long a space for the purpose. At any rate, the body should come together, expecting and determined to take all the time—be it less or more—that is really necessary to do the work proposed, and to do it thoroughly and well.

#### VI.—PAPERS DESIGNED FOR THE CONGRESS.

Competent specialists of different countries should be invited to prepare papers on the various questions to come before the Congress. These papers should be brought within the briefest compass compatible with an adequate discussion of the topics treated, in no case exceeding twenty printed octavo pages, and ordinarily falling far within that limit. Each writer should be required, on pain of having his essay rejected, to furnish a brief abstract thereof, embodying its main points in print, and forwarding a number of copies. In all cases, the reading of papers should be limited to a half hour each, in order to afford ample time for the discussions by which they are to be followed, and which will, in all probability, be of no less importance than the papers themselves. If, in any case, the paper is too long for a full reading within the half hour, the writer must condense it, in the reading, to a compass not exceeding the specified limit. Papers designed for the Congress should be completed and dispatched, by post, to London in time to reach that city, *at the latest*, by the 20th of June, at which time, or thereabout, the International Committee will meet to examine the papers and arrange the order of business for the Congress. Although certain persons will be invited to furnish papers on given subjects, this should not exclude volunteer essays; and all who feel an inward impulse to use the pen for the benefit of the Congress should be free to do so, and to forward their productions to the International Committee at London. All papers, whether invited or otherwise, will be at the



absolute disposal of the said Committee for acceptance or rejection, according to the judgment formed of their merit or want of merit; as they will also, afterwards, be at the absolute disposal of the Congress, to print or not to print, in full or in part, as shall be determined by such Committee or Commission as it may depute to superintend the publication of its Transactions. Papers designed for the Congress should be addressed :

INTERNATIONAL PENITENTIARY CONGRESS,

No. 1 Adam Street, Adelphi,

London, W. C., England.

VII.—MEMORANDA ON THE PRISONS AND PRISON ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE SEVERAL COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN THE CONGRESS.

One aim of the Congress is to obtain a general view of the actual state of prisons throughout the world. To this end it will be necessary that each country or colony furnish such view of its own penal and reformatory institutions. But as the countries and colonies represented will undoubtedly be too numerous to allow an extended report to be made on each, it follows that, in each case, the paper offering the desired information should be a mere memorandum, covering only points of vital importance, and not exceeding a length that would admit of its being read in fifteen to twenty minutes; or, if the original paper prepared by the Committee be of greater length, an abridgement should be made for presentation to the Congress that will bring it within the limits named. To secure a certain degree of uniformity in the information sought, it may be well to indicate some of the points to which the Committees may direct their attention in preparing their memoranda, without however intending to restrict them to these points, or wishing at all to dictate the form they shall give to their paper.

1. *The Prison System* : Whether the cellular system or that of association prevails in your country, or if both, in what proportions? Classification of prisons as regards the classes of prisoners received into them? The number of prisons of each class? The average number of inmates in each class of prisons last year?

2. *General Administration* : Whether there is a central authority having control of the whole prison system? If such central authority is wanting, where is the managing power lodged? In either case, what is the result?

3. *Discipline* : Whether the discipline is intended mainly to be deterrent or reformatory? Whether, and if so, by what means, it is sought to plant hope in the breast of the prisoner, and keep it there? Whether punishments or rewards are most relied upon in administering the discipline of your prisons? What kinds of each are employed?

4. *Religious and Moral Agencies* : What agencies of this sort are employed by the administration? Whether volunteer visitors are admitted into the prisons to labor for the moral improvement of the inmates? The results in either case?

5. *Secular Instruction* : General condition of criminals, in point of education, on their commitment? Provision made for their mental improvement during their imprisonment by way of schools, libraries, &c.?

6. *Prison Labor* : Whether a distinction is made in your prisons between penal and industrial labor? The kinds of penal labor, if any, employed, and the results yielded by it? The kinds of industrial labor in use? The principle on which the industries of your prisons are organized—that is to say, whether the labor of the prisoners is let to contractors, or managed by the administration? Which of these systems do you prefer, and what are the grounds of your preference? Are the pro-

ceeds of prison labor in all or any of your prisons sufficient to meet their ordinary expenses? If not, how far do they fall short?

7. *Prison Officers*: How appointed, and for what length of time? Whether political influence enters as an element into their appointment, and if so, its effect? Their average qualifications and competency? Whether there are any special training-schools for prison officers? Do you regard such special education as essential to the highest efficiency of the penal administration of a country?

8. *Sanitary State of the Prisons*: General scale of prison dietaries? Ventilation? Drainage? Cleanliness? Sickness? Death-rate?

9. *Reformatory Results*: Whether the reformation of criminals is made a primary object of their treatment while in prison? Whether, as a matter of fact, prisoners in general, leave the prison-house better or worse than they entered it?

10. *Sentences*: Whether it is the practice of the criminal courts in your country to give short sentences for minor offences, and to repeat them often in the case of the same person? If so, what do you find to be the effect of this practice as regards the increase or diminution of crime?

11. *Kinds and Causes of Criminality*: What is the prevailing character of crime in your country? And what are found to be its leading causes?

12. *Juvenile Reformatories*: The number, character and general results of this class of institutions in your country, including all institutions that rightfully come under this designation, whether technically so named or not? The average aggregate number of inmates?

#### VIII.—SUGGESTED PROGRAMME FOR THE CONGRESS.

It is a question whether the Congress shall be divided into sections, more or less numerous, to do its work, or whether the accepted papers shall be read, and the discussions thereon had before the entire body.

Perhaps a combination of the two plans may be practicable. It does not appear to this Association that the whole work of the Congress can be accomplished within any reasonable time, with the body remaining together as a unit throughout the entire conference. A division into Sections, for at least a part of the work, would seem to be indispensable. The Sections might perhaps be arranged thus: I. Criminal Law Reform, including Criminal Administration. II. Police Action. III. Preventive and Reformatory Work. IV. Prison Discipline, including the Organization of Prisons and Prison Systems.

The Congress, it is understood, will hold its first session on the evening of Tuesday, July 3d, 1872, when an organization will be effected, and the opening Address of the President will be delivered.

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the 4th, 5th, and 6th, or so much of them as are necessary, may perhaps be fitly devoted to hearing and discussing reports on the actual state of penitentiary and reformatory discipline in the several countries and colonies represented in the Congress.

For Saturday, the 7th, arrangements will, quite probably, be made by our English friends, for visiting certain of the penal and reformatory institutions in London and its vicinity.

On Monday, the 9th, or the previous Friday, if the reports on the prisons of the different countries shall have been completed in time, work may be commenced in the several Sections, should that plan be the one finally adopted.

SECTION I. *Criminal Law Reform*.—The suggestion of special questions in this



Department is invited from the Committees to whom this circular is sent, and also the names of competent persons to prepare essays thereupon.

**SECTION II. *Police Action.***—"Habitual Crime" needs a stricter definition than it has heretofore received. The question, "What should be done with the Capitalists of Crime?" is one which ought to have thorough discussion. By this designation are meant: 1. The owners of houses rented as dwellings to habitual criminals, and of houses rented to persons who live by ministering to their gratifications; 2. The receivers of stolen goods; 3. The makers of the instruments used by thieves, forgers and coiners. The point for study here is, how an effectual blow can be struck at crime in this vital part. The proper organization of the detective force of a country, and the nature, scope, and extent of police supervision, are points which need further elucidation. We invite the suggestion of other topics for consideration in this Section.

**SECTION III. *Preventive and Reformatory Work.***—The best organization of preventive and reformatory institutions for juveniles, the most effective modes of managing them, the question of nautical reform schools, the disposition to be made of the inmates of reformatories, their supervision after they have been placed in situations, and the just responsibility of parents for the support of their children in preventive and reformatory institutions, are among the subjects which will claim attention in this Section; and others, doubtless, no less important, will be suggested by the Committees to which this circular is sent.

**SECTION IV. *Prison Discipline.***—Among the special subjects to be considered by this Section may be fitly included such as these following: The best form of organization for the penitentiary system of a State or country; the cellular system of imprisonment; the progressive classification of prisoners, as practised in the Crofton system; the abnormal moral condition of criminals and their proper treatment as determined by such anomaly; the extent to which moral forces may and ought to be substituted for material in the treatment of prisoners; how far and under what conditions agricultural colonies may be employed to advantage in the management of prisoners; the importance and necessity of a special education of prison officers; penal labor as distinguished from industrial labor in prisons; the development proper to be given to industrial labor in prisons; prison labor in its relations to free labor; education as an agent in reforming imprisoned criminals; religion as a reformatory power in prisons; the duty of society to liberated prisoners; the propriety of substituting indefinite for fixed sentences; the best means of ascertaining and recording the prior convictions of prisoners; prison statistics; and whether reasonable indemnity is due from society to persons judicially declared to have been wrongfully imprisoned. Other points will, without doubt, be suggested in the replies received to the present circular.

When the work of the several Sections shall have been completed, as much time as may be necessary should be devoted by the Congress, in united session, to the discussion of such general propositions as may have been submitted by the International Committee for the consideration and, if approved, the adoption of the Congress. And here it seems needful to remark that, while it is assumed that the International Committee will be ready with a series of propositions, prepared by itself, at the opening of the Congress, entire freedom should be allowed to any and all members to offer, within a specified period during the sessions of the body, such additional propositions as to them may seem fit, it being understood that such additional propositions shall be referred, without debate, to the International Committee, which should be required to submit, some days in advance of the adjournment, a final report, amending, curtailing or enlarging the Declaration of Principles, originally



ffered by it, agreeably to the light derived from the papers read, the discussions had, and the special resolutions or propositions submitted by individual members, during the continuance of the conference.

The question is here thrown out for consideration, whether it may not be desirable to invite some of the more distinguished clergymen of London to preach before the Congress, on the Sunday or Sundays, which will be included within the time of its meeting, on subjects suited to the object of its labors.

It will not have failed to be observed by the National Committees, to which this circular is addressed, that one important question, keenly debated at this moment in many countries, has been omitted in the foregoing programme—viz., the question of the death-penalty. This omission is not an inadvertence, but was caused by the belief that opinion on this subject is so divided that no authoritative, and, therefore, no satisfactory, conclusion in reference to it can be reached and announced by the Congress. If the general feeling is otherwise, the American Committee will cheerfully yield to the expressed will of the majority of voices.

The illustrious English philanthropist, JOHN HOWARD, began his labors in the field of prison reform in the year 1773—ninety-nine years, therefore, prior to the Congress of 1872. It seems fit that the occasion should be signalized by a discourse on the "Life and Labors of Howard, and the Progress of Prison Discipline during the Century succeeding the Commencement of his Work as a Prison Reformer." It is suggested that such a discourse might suitably be delivered at a special session on some evening during the meeting of the Congress.

Before leaving the subject of the programme [of proceedings, the undersigned would suggest, or rather adopt a suggestion received from another quarter, that before the body closes its sessions, a commission should be given to certain members to digest for publication the experience accumulated in the Congress, and to edit and superintend the printing of its transactions.

#### XI.—A TANGIBLE ISSUE OF THE CONGRESS.

There can be no doubt that a large amount of information on all points connected with prison discipline and the repression of crime will have been collected by the Congress, that certain general principles will have been agreed upon, and that a strong impulse will have been given to the cause of penitentiary reform throughout the world. But if the matter stop here, the labors of the Congress will have been comparatively barren of permanent results, because the momentum gained will soon have expended itself. It seems, therefore, in the highest degree desirable, that some means should be devised to continue and, if possible, multiply the benefits flowing from the Congress, as from a living fountain. No better agency to this end occurs to the American Prison Association than the creation of a central bureau, to which intelligence relating to this interest and the progress made therein shall be regularly communicated every year from all parts of the world, and from which, in a digested and printed form, it shall be again distributed to all the civilized nations of the earth. Thus every part of the world will be kept informed of what is doing in every other part, in reference to this vital interest of society—the treatment of crime and criminals, with a view to the repression of the one and the reformation of the other. In this manner a continual circulation of ideas will be maintained; the nature and result of experiments in penitentiary and reformatory discipline, undertaken in any given country, will be promptly made known in all others; and an honorable rivalry will be kept up between nations, in which each, while rejoicing in every instance and at every proof of progress elsewhere, will yet strive to outstrip its fellows in the race of improvement. With National Committees or Associations actively at

work in the different countries, with a great central organization performing the double function of a receiver and distributor of intelligence, and with international penitentiary conferences renewed from time to time, it is a reasonable presumption that within the next half century, progress, not hitherto so much as dreamed of even by the most sanguine, will be made in the knowledge and application of processes for the prevention of crime and the reformation of criminals.

#### X.—CONCLUSION.

The undersigned desires here to repeat that, with the exception of the place and time of holding the Congress, whatever is contained in this circular is to be regarded in the light of suggestion, and by no means as *dicta*, embodying fixed determinations. The paper is altogether consultative in its character, and the freest expression of opinion is invited on all the points touched upon, as well as the utmost freedom in suggesting others that may have been omitted, and which are deemed to be important by any of the National Committees. This remark applies especially to the "programme." Suggestions as to the curtailment or addition of topics, and of the names of specialists competent to the adequate treatment of these or others, are particularly desired.

Points in regard to which no exceptions are formally taken in the replies to this circular will be regarded as approved by the Committees which are silent upon them.

The earliest practicable response to this circular-letter is respectfully asked; and as soon as answers, in sufficient number, shall have been received, another paper, similar in character, but modified to meet the general wish, as the same may have been conveyed in the replies received, will be issued, and immediately forwarded to all the National Committees.

By order of the American Prison Association:

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

E. C. WINFS,

Cor. Sec'y., and Commissioner of the United States.

No. 46 Bible House, New York.



## POSTSCRIPT.

It has been judged expedient to append the official action of the Italian Government, in response to the communication made to it by the American Commissioner, received since the foregoing was in type. It consists, as will be seen, of a report made by Signor Lanza, Minister of the Interior, and also President of the Council of Ministers, and a decree of his Majesty Victor Emanuel II. pursuant thereto. Mr. Lanza, in his paper addressed to the King, has fallen into one or two slight errors of fact, quite natural for him to make. Neither the Congress at Cincinnati nor the proposed Congress of London was due to the action of the Prison Association of New York. The proposition to take the initiative in both those movements was made to that Association; but, after long consideration, the Association declined such leadership. The Congress of Cincinnati was convened on a call issued to that effect by a large number of the leading prison and reformatory officers in the United States, and other persons interested in prison reform; and the movement, looking to the International Congress of London, was formally originated by the Congress at Cincinnati.

The date of the opening of the Congress of London, uncertain for some time, stated by Mr. Lanza to be in the month of August, has been definitively fixed for July 3d, 1872.

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### [TRANSLATION.]

REPORT TO HIS MAJESTY BY THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, IN AN AUDIENCE ON THE 5TH OF NOVEMBER, 1871, IN REFERENCE TO A DECREE NAMING A COMMISSION CHARGED WITH STUDYING THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS PRESENTED BY MODERN PRISON DISCIPLINE, AND TO PROPOSE A SOLUTION OF THEM.

SIRE:—When the illustrious English Philanthropist, JOHN HOWARD, determined—now about a century ago—to consecrate his life to the benefit of suffering humanity, he prepared to visit the prisons of Europe, showing to the governments and to the people the unnumbered evils which abounded therein, to the injury of the civil state. The result of these efforts was an unanimous sentiment in favor of reform, to the end that the places destined to the detention of the accused, or the punishment of the guilty, might not serve to pervert the former, and to render the latter still more corrupt.

Even before that epoch, in some of the States of Europe penitentiary reform had begun to manifest itself in its practical applications; and Italy, first among these, was able to show, with pride, the House of Correction of St. Michael in Rome, to say nothing of those of Milan and of Turin. But these were isolated experiments; they were only the precursors of a more extended movement, which, from the word of Howard, soon received a vigorous impulse.

It would, no doubt, be highly useful to the history of the progressive civilization of humanity, to follow, step by step, this diffusion of the ideas promulgated by Howard, and to trace the manifold but constant influence which these had upon the studies of the learned, upon the pious labors of philanthropists, upon the acts of parliaments,

and upon the measures of governments; were it not that this examination would be outside of the present purpose, and would only aid in calling to mind how the questions, raised by prison discipline, in their intimate and extended relations with moral, economic and medical science, have, since that time, occupied a constantly increasing number of distinguished inquirers, and have met with a reception, more and more favorable, from eminent statesmen and enlightened legislators.

But the researches and experiments, heretofore made, have been often circumscribed within the limits of each country; and even when the results have not remained unknown to other sister nations, these have almost always lacked that unity of conception and opinion, which alone can aid in establishing comparisons to the advantage of universal science. In more than one Congress the thought and proposition have been entertained to obviate so grave a defect; but down to the present time, that aim has not been accomplished.

It is now some years since the Prison Association of New York, one of the most illustrious and most spirited that America boasts, judging that the problem of the repression of crime, despite its importance, has not yet been resolved, and perhaps with a view to give unity of direction and of system to the prison administrations of different countries, by means of the greater influence of the verdict of an authoritative assembly, proposed the reunion of an International Penitentiary Congress, to be held in London in August, 1872, in which should be convened, from every part of the civilized world, all those who have distinguished themselves by the practical or theoretical study of this important branch of knowledge—and in which, above all, Governments should take an interest, placing themselves at the head of public opinion.

A preparatory Congress was held in October, 1870, at Cincinnati (State of Ohio), through the efforts of the aforesaid Association. Many and important questions were raised in the Congress; and a series of maxims on prison discipline, which deserve the most earnest consideration, was adopted. The necessary measures were also taken for convening the Congress in London in August, 1872; and a Commissioner was appointed, who was charged with the duty of repairing to Europe to confer with the various Governments, inviting them to take part in this great scientifico-social movement.

This Commissioner, who was also selected by the Government of the United States as a delegate to the proposed Congress, in fulfilment of the mission entrusted to him, presented himself to the present Reporter, who, comprehending the philanthropic end which was sought to be attained through a conference of all civilized nations, did not hesitate to assure him that Italy would not be second to any other in aiding the American Association in the noble undertaking which it had proposed to itself.

Despite the vicissitudes through which Italy has been obliged to pass since its present constitution was established, questions of penitentiary reform have by no means been neglected. Special Commissions have been named, within the last few years, to study the solution of these questions; and the General Direction of Prisons has exerted itself to collect and publish all the acts and results of its own administration, justly convinced that a rich series of facts, patiently collected and carefully collated, must precede the study of any useful reform whatsoever.

The opinions of the men called to take part in these commissions were not, to speak truly, always unanimous. Italy, like America, like the greater part of the civilized nations of Europe, has found itself always in presence of this great problem unsolved; but that only proves the difficulty of the problem, and the necessity that the Government invite to a fresh study of it persons thoroughly competent, and



whose competency is generally recognized—of the result of whose labors the approaching Congress of London will be able, at the same time, to avail itself.

In view of the foregoing considerations, the Reporter begs to present for the approval of your Majesty the following decree :

The decree of the King, which it is not deemed necessary to translate in full, follows, appointing a Commission of twenty eminent citizens, who are charged not only to employ their efforts in behalf of the "International Penitentiary Congress of London," but also, in the words of Mr. Lanza's Report, to "study the most important questions presented by modern penitentiary science, and to propose their solution." Among the Commissioners thus named are several high functionaries of the State, the Mayor and first President of the Court of Cassation of Florence, several Professors of Penal Law in the Universities of Italy, the Director-General and two Inspectors-General of Prisons, &c., &c., &c.

It is evident that the Italian Government is thoroughly earnest in this work, and it is to be hoped that its example will prove contagious.







